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HEALING WORDS. ANCIENT RHETORIC AND MEDICINE IN PASCASIUS JUSTUS'
TREATISE *ALEA SIVE DE CURANDA LUDENDI IN PECUNIAM CUPIDITATE* (1561)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Long considered to be a moral vice requiring strong legal and religious action, excessive gambling has gradually turned into a medical problem in its own right. 'Problem gambling' has come to be regarded as pathological: 'problem gamblers' are said to suffer from an addiction characterized by, among other things, the experience of an overpowering urge to gamble, the complete loss of control once gambling has started, the continuation of the same gambling behaviour despite persistent losses, and the concomitant disruption of familial, personal, and vocational pursuits. In short, problem gambling is compulsive gambling, a behavioural disturbance which can and should be analyzed in terms of a mental disorder.¹

In a fairly recent book on pathological gambling, Brian Castellani contends that medical explanations of compulsive gambling began to appear in scientific journals at the beginning of the twentieth century; the explanations offered were based on psychoanalytic case reports.² Against Castellani, however, I would like to demonstrate that psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud were not the first ones to offer a purely medical explanation of 'problem gambling'. Indeed, as early as 1560, Pascasius Justus Turcaeus, a humanist and physician from Eeklo, a small town in Flanders (Belgium), wrote the very first medical monograph on compulsive gambling. The work, first issued

¹ M.G. Dickerson, *Compulsive Gamblers*, Longman Applied Psychology (London-New York, 1984), pp. 72-74. See also the list of diagnostic criteria published by the National Council of Problem Gambling, on <http://www.ncpgambling.org>.

² B Castellani, *Pathological Gambling. The Making of a Medical Problem* (New York, 2000). Typically and interestingly, the early psychoanalysts drew heavily on medical cases described in European literature. Thus Sigmund Freud's observations about compulsive gambling were inspired by Dostoyevsky's novel *The Gambler*.

by Joannes Oporinus at Basel in 1561, was entitled *Alea, sive de curanda ludendi in pecuniam cupiditate*. The title clearly reveals the author's intentions. Contrary to the moralizing discourse of contemporary clerics who considered gambling indicative of man's greed, Pascasius offers a medical explanation of the socially disruptive phenomenon and, consequently, proposes a medical treatment for those people who find themselves afflicted by the disease.

In the present article, I will first try to show that Pascasius' diagnosis was firmly rooted in a humoral theory that was heavily dependent upon Aristotle's and Galen's writings. Compulsive gambling is regarded as a passion or mental disturbance that results from both a hot or sanguine temperament and melancholy. Despite his insistence on the physiological cause of compulsive gambling, Pascasius did not propose a medical treatment based on the prescription of a proper diet or the administration of special drugs. Rather he drew heavily on ancient moral writings – including Galen's – to devise a detailed psychotherapy which depended first and foremost on the application of cognitive strategies. According to Pascasius, persuasive words were needed to dispel the wrong opinions that created and maintained a gambler's mental disorder.

By analyzing Pascasius' intriguing work on compulsive gambling, I hope to uncover a lesser-known aspect of the rich and fascinating history of Galenism in early modern times – a history that cannot fully be told by focusing exclusively on the production and diffusion of Greek editions, Latin translations, and learned commentaries.³ As Pascasius' treatise makes clear, Galen's impact on western thought went far beyond the realm of traditionally established medical fields such as physiology, anatomy, and dietetics. In order to understand why Pascasius undertook the remarkable task of analyzing the moral and social problem of gambling from a Galenic point of view, a few words have to be said about the author's social and intellectual background, as well as about the genesis and diffusion of his treatise.

2. PASCASIUS JUSTUS TURCAEUS, *PEREGRINATIO ACADEMICA*, AND MEDICAL HUMANISM

Pascasius' medical fame rests almost entirely on his discovery of compulsive gambling as a mental disorder requiring psychotherapy; his treatise *Alea* was the only work he

³ As has been done brilliantly by O. Temkin in his standard work *Galenism. Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy*, Cornell Publications in the History of Science (Ithaca-London, 1973).

ever published.⁴ However important his discovery may have been, it did not suffice to protect his name completely against the ravages of time. He is not mentioned in any modern dictionary of scientific or medical biography.⁵ No attention is paid to him in overviews of the history of medicine in the Low Countries.⁶ On the other hand, his intellectual achievement attracted a considerable amount of interest in the early modern period. Together with a number of other, admittedly more theological and legal tracts on gambling, his treatise was issued again in 1617 by Johann von Münster.⁷ A third edition, published by Lodewijk Elzevier in 1642, was prepared by the Dutch humanist Marcus Zuerius Boxhernius and dedicated to the physician Justus Turcq, a descendant of Pascasius's.⁸ Moreover, his work was eagerly read and lavishly pillaged by the French ecclesiastical author Jean-Baptiste Thiers for his moralizing treatise on games of 1686.⁹ But when, at the beginning of the twentieth century, behavioural scientists started to show a new interest in the medical background of 'problem gambling', Pascasius's treatise had already fallen into almost complete oblivion.¹⁰

⁴ It should be added, however, that he considerably enhanced his reputation as a medical practitioner by successfully healing William of Orange who got seriously injured during the siege of Antwerp in 1582. See J.N. Paquot, art. 'Pâquier Joostens', in *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire littéraire des dix-sept provinces des Pays-Bas, de la Principauté de Liège, et de quelques contrées voisines*, 1 (Louvain, 1765), pp. 588-589; V. Jacques, art. 'Joostens (Pâquier) ou Justus (Paschasius)', in *Biographie Nationale de Belgique*, 10 (Bruxelles, 1888-1889), cols. 513-514.

⁵ While a short lemma is devoted to him in Christian Gottlieb Jöchers *Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexikon*, 2 (Leipzig, 1750), col. 2041, no entree is to be found in the *Biographisches Lexikon der hervorragenden Ärzte*, eds. W. Haberling, F. Hübotter, H. Vierordt, 6 vols. (Berlin-Wien, 1929-1935). Likewise, Pascasius is omitted by V. Klimpel in his *Schriftsteller-Ärzte. Biographisch-bibliographisches Lexikon von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Hürtgenwald, 1999).

⁶ Thus, he is conspicuously absent from F.-A. Sonderhorst, *Geschiedenis van de geneeskunde in België* (Brussel, 1981).

⁷ Pascasii ... *Alea, sive de curanda in pecuniam ludendi cupiditate libri duo ... nunc ... una cum collectaneis, tam veterum, quam recentium authorum de sortibus, aleae, taxillorum et chartarum ludo, auctiores iterum in lucem editi studio et labore Joannis a Munster (Neapoli, Nemetum: impensis Joannis Caroli Unckelii librarii Francofurtensis, 1617)*. Copy checked in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, shelf mark R.8434.

⁸ *Pascasii Justi de alea libri duo, cum epistola Marci Zuerii Boxhornii* (Amsterdam: apud L. Elzevirium, 1642). Copy checked in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, shelf mark R. 54912. On Justus Turcq (1611-1680), see the entree in *Nieuw Nederlands Biographisch Woordenboek*, 2 (Haarlem, 1852), 1457. For a more detailed description of the various editions of Pascasius's work, see *Pascasii Iusti Ecloviensis, Philosophiae et Medicinae Doctoris, Alea sive de curanda ludendi in pecuniam cupiditate libri II* (...), ed. Susan-Türkis Kronegger-Roth (Salzburg, 2000), pp. xix-xxi. I would like to thank prof. dr. G. Petersmann and prof. dr. F. Witek for kindly having sent me a copy of this unpublished doctoral dissertation.

⁹ Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Traité des jeux et divertissemens qui peuvent être permis ou qui doivent être défendus aux Chrétiens* (Paris, 1686).

¹⁰ The only scholarly article thus far written on Pascasius is L. Elaut, 'Paschasius Justus Turcq. Een zestiende-eeuws speelziek jonker en medicus uit Eeklo, lijfarts van de markies van Bergen-op-Zoom', *Brabantia*, 1 (1952), 194-208.

Boxhornius added a biographical account of Pascasius to his new edition of *Alea*.¹¹ Together with the information that can be culled from Pascasius' letter of dedication in *Alea*, it provides us with at least a few clues about his whereabouts before his return to the Low Countries at the end of 1560. Indeed, it was shortly before the publication of his treatise that Pascasius left Italy and started a career as the personal physician of John IV of Glimes, marquis of Bergen-op-Zoom. John played a leading role in the opposition of the Netherlandish nobility against Granvelle, king Philip II's 'minister' in the Low Countries. As early as 1542, Pascasius, a member of the local gentry, undertook a long travel which led him to several courts and academic centres in France, Spain, and Italy. Probably in or around 1552, he left Spain for Italy, where he attended the universities of Rome, Bologna, Padova, and Pavia successively in order to devote himself to literature and study both philosophy and medicine. It is most probably at the university of Pavia that he obtained his doctoral degree in medicine. During his stay in Pavia, he met Philip of Marnix, better known as Marnix of Saint-Aldegonde, who was to play a crucial role in the secession of the Northern Netherlands from Spain.¹² Philip even wrote a preliminary poem in Greek for his treatise on gambling.¹³

Pascasius' decision to study medicine at the university of Pavia was certainly not strange or whimsical. It should be stressed that, by the time he arrived there, the *Studium generale Ticinense* had lost quite a bit of its previous glory and appeal to foreign students as a result of the ongoing wars which started in 1494 and culminated in 1525 in the sack of the town and the temporary closure of the university. However, it opened its doors again in 1531/1532 and slowly but steadily recovered at least partly from the damage done. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the university continued to attract a considerable amount of students from beyond the Alps, most of whom admittedly came to Pavia to study law. Just ranking behind Bologna and Padua in the fifteenth century, Pavia fell to a middle-rank position among Italian universities in

¹¹ Pascasii Iusti de alea libri duo, f. [*7v°].

¹² Philip probably arrived in Pavia in the course of 1558. See R. Van Roosbroeck, art. 'Marnix, Philips van', in *Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek*, 5 (Brussel, 1965), cols. 591-606 (esp. col. 592).

¹³ Φιλίπποϛ οJ Μαρνικιοϛ προ;ç το;n ajnagnwvsthñ (p. 10). We refer to Kronegger-Roth's critical edition from 2000. From Pascasius' letter of dedication, dated on 31 August 1560, it can be inferred that Philip of Marnix was still in Pavia in August 1560. Indeed, the author refers to reunions which took place and were still attended by Philip at that time: "(...) ac praesertim cum etiam ad hos nostros de te sermones nobilis, modestus et eruditus adolescens Philippus Marnicius accedit" (p. 5, ll. 28-29).

the second half of the sixteenth century, especially in arts and medicine.¹⁴ This is not to say that the medical teaching which Pascasius received was provincial and antiquated. The medical curriculum in Pavia, as at other Italian universities, remained of course largely based on the medieval canon of authoritative texts written by Aristotle and Galen. Traditionally, these texts were commented upon in *quaestiones* and *disputationes* which were primarily aimed at solving discrepancies by making use of a strictly scholastic method of reasoning according to Aristotelian logic. This system remained more or less intact in the course of the sixteenth century. Yet, medical education did change considerably at that time.¹⁵ Thus, the Aristotelian-Galenic approach to medicine was seriously questioned by Hieronymus Cardanus, the incomparable *uomo universale* – doctor, philosopher, mathematician, astronomer, and astrologer at the same time – who from 1544 until 1551 and once again from 1559 until 1562 presided over the school of medicine at Pavia.¹⁶ There is no doubt that Pascasius attended his lectures. Whether it is Cardanus who suggested the young lad from the Netherlands to examine the medical aspects of gambling is an attractive but purely speculative hypothesis. Not unlike Pascasius himself, Cardanus was a passionate gambler, at least in his younger years. As can be inferred from his autobiography, *De vita propria* (9-14), he used to gamble quite heavily during his student days in the 1520s in order to supplement his income. Although he cured himself from his addiction when he got an appointment as a professor of medicine in 1543, he continued to show an exceptionally vivid interest in gambling.¹⁷

¹⁴ See P.F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore-London, 2002), pp. 82-93 (esp. pp. 92-93). For the presence of foreign students, see also Simona Negruzzo, 'Sulle orme di Erasmo. Studenti europei nella Pavia di età moderna', in G.P. Prizzi & A. Romano (eds.), *Studenti e dottori nella università italiane (origini – XX secolo)*, Centro interuniversitario per la storia della università italiane, Studi I (Bologna, 2000), pp. 51-80.

¹⁵ Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 314-352. A minute analysis of the scholastic approach to medicine is offered by P.-G. Ottoson, *Scholastic Medicine and Philosophy. A Study of Commentaries on Galen's Tegni (ca. 1300-1450)* (Napoli, 1984). See also Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval & Renaissance Medicine. An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago-London, 1990), pp. 48-77.

¹⁶ Recent biographical overviews by G. Gliozzi, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 19 (Roma, 1976), pp. 758-763 (esp. pp. 759-760) on his professorship at Pavia) and E. Wolff, in Colette Nativel (ed.), *Centuria latinae. Cent une figures humanistes de la Renaissance aux Lumières offertes à Jacques Chomarat*, Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance, 314 (Genève, 1997), pp. 249-254 (esp. p. 249). On Cardanus's place in the history of early modern medicine, see Nancy G. Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror. Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton, 1997).

¹⁷ It should be added that his focus seems to have been strictly scholarly, if not purely mathematical. On Cardanus's mathematical work on gambling, probably written in the 1560s but only published posthumously in the Lyon edition of his *Opera omnia* from 1663, see now O. Ore, *Cardano the Gambling Scholar*, with an English translation of *The Book on Gambes* by S.H. Gould (Princeton, 1953).

Cardanus occupies a special, if not slightly marginal, place in the history of medical humanism which spread all over Italy and changed the discipline from the late fifteenth century onwards. A far less original and brilliant thinker than Cardanus, Pascasius was undoubtedly more inspired by those humanists who did not radically reject the authority of the Aristotelian-Galenic legacy, but rather aimed at improving medical learning by searching out hitherto unknown Greek medical texts, producing more accurate Greek editions of the available texts, and making more fluent Latin translations of them. Freeing themselves from the rigid format of scholastic commentary, the humanist physicians started to write monographs on various topics in which they sought to combine traditional doctrine with personal observation.¹⁸

This is exactly the approach adopted by Pascasius himself. Unsurprisingly, his work contains two parts, the first one being devoted to a careful diagnosis of the medical problem of gambling, the second one suggesting an adequate therapy. Although the analysis of gambling in the first book has a strong Aristotelian flavour in so far as it is tightly structured according to Aristotle's well-known categorization of causes, Pascasius did not write a scholastic treatise. For one thing, he does not follow a strictly dialectical line of reasoning. Nor does his style smack of scholastic aridity. As the author points out in the preface to the reader, his treatise originated from a public oration held in Bologna.¹⁹ In reworking his speech, Pascasius made sure to adopt a smooth and quiet style best suited for an exposé that was more aimed at instruction than emotional stimulation.²⁰ In fact, Pascasius seems to have followed the lead of Galen himself in adopting a quite leisurely way of writing in which argumentation and narration go hand in hand. Indeed, Pascasius likes to pad out his lessons with examples and anecdotes, some of which are derived from personal experience, while others are taken from classical literature. Thus, he delves into Suetonius' *Vitae Caesarum*: the behaviour of the emperors Augustus, Caligula, and Domitian – all of them passionate

¹⁸ On medical humanism, its features and impact, see esp. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, pp. 187-193 and Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, pp. 324-352. See also Pamela O. Long, 'Humanism and Science', in Albert Rabil Jr. (ed.), *Renaissance Humanism. Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia, 1988), pp. 486-512 (esp. pp. 494-496).

¹⁹ 'Praefatio ad lectores', pp. 11-16.

²⁰ 'Praefatio ad lectores': p. 14, ll. 3-7: "Non ornato et numeroso versuum aliquo genere (...), non disputatione et dialogo, non oratorio aliquo, quod splendorem aut magnam aliquam dicendi vim et animi alacritatem requirit, sed didactico, ut vocant, libero, tenui et quieto orationis genere, at maxime ad docendum apto, rem omnem tractandam recepi." Cf. Cicero, *Orator*, 64. See further A.D. Leeman, *Orationis ratio. The Stylistic Theories and Practice of the Roman Orators, Historians, and Philosophers* (Amsterdam, 1963), p. 203.

gamblers – is said to prove that gambling has no connection with avarice but rather with prodigality.²¹ Our author appears to be particularly fond of Terentian comedy. Although his plays do not contain any detailed description of a compulsive gambler, they do feature a number of characters who reveal a specific temper or mental disturbance.²² Tellingly, some of the passages quoted are accompanied by a short philological aside: as a humanist physician or a medical humanist, Pascasius was eager to demonstrate his hermeneutic skills.

It is only fair to say that the reading strategy adopted by Pascasius was not always very sophisticated or subtle. Thus he quotes lavishly from the sixth book of Virgil's *Aeneid* – only to offer an unsurprisingly moralizing interpretation of the well-known tragic love story of Aeneas and Dido. Following a long hermeneutical tradition, Pascasius reads the story as an allegory of the conflict between Reason (*Ratio*) and Passion (*Libido*), a conflict which is resolved in favour of Reason. According to the author, the conflict stands as a model for the inner battle which a compulsive gambler wages – and, indeed, has to wage in order to be cured of his disease. In short, moralism and psychotherapy go hand in hand.²³

3. DIAGNOSING COMPULSIVE GAMBLING

In the first part of his treatise on gambling, Pascasius dismisses an analysis of compulsive gambling in terms of *avaritia*. The association with greed was typical of the theological discourse on gambling in early modern times. It goes back to Aristotle who in his *Nicomachean Ethics* put gamblers on a par with thieves and robbers. What they have in common is exactly their greed (*ajneleuqeriva*): they care more for wealth than they ought to – to such an extent that they are willing to acquire it by making use of

²¹ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 10, pp. 55-56. See also 'Epistola dedicatoria', p. 6, ll. 35-36. Cf. Suet., *Vita Augusti*, 71; *Vita Caligulae*, 41, 2; *Vita Domitiani*, 21.

²² Thus, Pascasius allows himself a small digression to shed more light on Pamphilus, the main character of Terence's *Andria*. His behaviour becomes perfectly understandable, he says, as soon as one realizes that he behaves like a 'Netherlander': "Hunc locum intelligere qui velit, Andreae Terent. act. 1. sce. 1. legat. Ibi enim Pamphilus plane Belgam agit. Nam Hispanus aliquis dixisset, libenter se vel Charini causa id esse facturum" (marginal note to lib. 1, cap. 6.1, p. 38, ll. 12-13).

²³ On the allegorical reading of Virgil in the Renaissance, see Craig W. Kallendorf, *Virgil and the Myth of Venice: Books and Readers in the Italian Renaissance* (Oxford, 1999). It should be noted that Pascasius draws a close parallel between the passion of gambling and lovesickness, both of which stem from burnt melancholy. On this theory, which ultimately goes back to (Pseudo-)Aristotle's *Problemata*, XXX, I, 953B, see L. Babb, *The Elizabethan Malady: A Study of Melancholia in English Literature from 1580 to 1642* (East Lansing, 1951), p. 131 and W. Seuntjens, 'Damp, walm en rook: luchtige hartstochten in de literatuur van de zeventiende eeuw', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 19.2 (2003), 169-180 (p. 172).

dishonorable or sordid means.²⁴ Now, Pascasius does not deny that compulsive gamblers want to make a lot of money in an easy and quick way. However, they are not simply greedy (αφνελευθεροί), but rather belong to the subcategory of prodigal or wasteful people (α[σ]ωτοι) who, according to Aristotle, “take from the wrong sources, and are in this respect mean.”²⁵

Pascasius is of the opinion that greed (or prodigality, for that matter) does not suffice to explain the disruptive behaviour of compulsive gamblers. It only offers a partial explanation, as it is only the *causa (finalis) intermedia*.²⁶ What really drives compulsive gamblers is a particular attitude or disposition which compels them to try their luck against their better knowledge and never to give up, assuming that sooner or later the tide must turn to their advantage. In other words, compulsive gamblers are fundamentally characterized by a peculiar kind of narrow-mindedness which makes them lose their sense of reality.

This psychological mechanism, which is still widely acknowledged by contemporary psychologists and psychotherapists dealing with compulsive gambling, is analyzed by Pascasius in terms of *eujelpistiva* – a concept borrowed from Aristotle’s penetrating description of youth in his *Rhetoric*. According to the Stagirite, youngsters are full of hopeful expectation (ευφελπιστιωα).²⁷ They are similar to people who are under the influence of wine: not unlike drunkards, they are full of heat, partly because of their nature, partly because of the fact that, contrary to older people, they have not yet suffered many disappointments:

“Young people are sanguine; nature warms their blood as though with excess of wine; and besides that, they have as yet met with few disappointments. Their lives are mainly spent not in memory but in expectation; for expectation refers to the future, memory to the past, and youth has a long future before it and a short past behind it (...). Their hot tempers and hopeful dispositions make them more courageous than older men are; the hot temper prevents fear, and the hopeful disposition creates confidence; we cannot feel

²⁴ Arist., *Eth. Nic.* IV.1 1122a7-13.

²⁵ Arist., *Eth. Nic.* IV.1 1121b1-5. Cf. *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 10, pp. 56-57.

²⁶ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 4, p. 26, ll. 16-18: “Nam hi quidem etsi pecunias subinde vehementer expetere videntur, tamen id non sicut avari ultimo vel praecipuo fine faciunt, sed medio potius, cum explendis cupiditatibus illas quaerant.” Cf. *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 4, p. 26, ll. 24-26: “Itaque duplex fere est aleae finis: medius unus et proximus, qui quidem pecunia est, ultimus alter, qui voluptates, luxum et vitae commoda respicit.”

²⁷ On the semantic range of *eijlpivç* in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, see G.S. Gravlee, ‘Aristotle on Hope’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 38 (2000), 461-477 and M. Huys, ‘De “hoop” bij Aristoteles en de wanhoop van de vertaler’, *Lampas*, 40.3 (2007), 196-210.

fear so long as we are feeling angry, and any expectation of good makes us confident.”²⁸

In paraphrasing Aristotle's description of youth, Pascasius translates *eujelpistiva* as *confidentia* or *confidens spes*, terms which are often associated with more pejorative denotations such as *inconsideratio* and *temeritas*.²⁹ It is Aristotle's analysis which made Pascasius aware of the fact that compulsive gambling should not primarily be understood as a moral flaw deriving from greed. Indeed, Aristotle demonstrated that young men care little about money:

“While they love honour, they love victory still more; for youth is eager for superiority over others, and victory is one form of this. They love both more than they love money, which indeed they love very little, not having yet learnt what it means to be without it.”³⁰

As we have seen, young men are not greedy but rather full of high expectations (*ευφραδλπιδε|*) and hot-tempered (*διαωθερμοι*). The connection between the two is all the more interesting as it allowed Pascasius to explain why gambling was so popular in the southern part of Europe, especially in Spain, as well as in Latin America. Indeed, following an ethnographic stereotype that was widespread in early modern times, the author considers a sanguine condition as typical of peoples who live in a relatively warm climate. It is precisely this condition that made Spaniards (and Peruvians) more vulnerable to compulsive gambling than other peoples, such as the *Belgae*, the inhabitants of the Netherlands, who lived in a colder environment and accordingly had a colder temperament.³¹

Pascasius' method can easily be summarized. The author takes the Aristotelian concept of *eujelpistiva* or *confidentia* as the basis of his medical analysis of compulsive gambling. To be more precise, it is identified as the formal cause (*causa formalis*) of the disease. Excessive heat or *calor*, on the other hand, functions as the efficient cause (*causa efficiens*). This efficient cause could easily be analyzed in terms

²⁸ Arist., *Rhet.* II.12 1389a18-28. Translation by W. Rhys Roberts from *The Complete Works of Aristotle. The Revised Oxford Translation*, edited by Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2, Bollingen Series 71.2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995²), p. 2213. The description of youth was rephrased in more explicitly medical, that is to say, humoral, terms by the author of the *Problemata physica*, which traditionally formed part of the vast Aristotelian corpus. Cf. *Probl.* XXX.1 955a.

²⁹ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 6, pp. 30-31.

³⁰ Arist., *Rhet.* II.12 1389a12-16; *ibidem*.

³¹ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 6, p. 31, l. 30-p. 32, l. 6 and lib. 1, cap. 6.1, pp. 34-35. See further F. Lestringant, 'Europe et théorie des climats dans la seconde moitié du XVIe siècle', in *La conscience européenne au XVe et au XVIe siècle*, Collection de l'École Normale Supérieure de Jeunes Filles, 22 (Paris, 1982), pp. 206-226.

of the humoral theory as it had found its expression in the Hippocratic corpus and was further developed by Galen in the first century AD. The English translation quoted above makes the bridge between Aristotle and Galen explicit: hot-tempered people are equated with sanguine people.

This is not to say that Pascasius links compulsive gambling with a sanguine temperament in a straight and uncomplicated way. ‘Hot-temperedness’ does not automatically lead to the mental disturbance that compulsive gambling in his opinion really is. Melancholy is involved as well. In order to understand this connection it is important to know that both Aristotle (or at least Pseudo-Aristotle) and Galen discerned various types of melancholy. In his fairly detailed analysis of melancholy, Pascasius appears to combine elements from both authors. A first type of melancholy is defined by natural black bile which is heavy, cold, and dry. According to Pascasius, an excessive predominance of this black bile creates melancholics who are timid, fearful, and depressed. They are to be distinguished from melancholics who from ancient times onwards were considered to be exceptionally creative. Referring to Plato, (Pseudo-) Aristotle, and Galen, our author emphasizes that those persons are characterized by a high proportion of hot bile.³²

This hot and impetuous kind of bile does not derive from natural black bile as such, but rather from the excessive presence of so-called melancholic blood which eventually turns into black bile if it is excessively heated in the spleen’s blocked and inflamed blood vessels.³³ Trying to connect Galen’s humoral theory with Aristotle’s description of young men, Pascasius adds that the inflated self-confidence typical of compulsive gamblers derives from one particular kind of melancholic blood, which he calls “melancholic blood which is similar to wine, that is to say fuming and as it were boiling up with a certain movement.”³⁴ According to Pascasius, compulsive gamblers belong to this last category of melancholics.

Rising as smoke, the black vapours from the spleen affect the brain so that it can no longer function normally. Melancholy gives way to mania, which is accompanied by,

³² *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 6, p. 32, ll. 25-33. Cf. Plato, *Ion* 533^c-534a, *Phaedrus* 245a (cf. Cic., *De orat.* 2, 194); Arist., *Probl.* XXX, 954a34-39; Galen., *De natura hominis*, 15, 97 (Kühn).

³³ Galen., *De locis affectis*, 3, 9 (8, 176-178 Kühn).

³⁴ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 6.1, p. 36, ll. 32-34: “caliditatem hanc, eujelpistivan quae generat, a qua quidem aleam hanc nostram suscitari praecipue diximus, non cuiusvis ego caloris aut sanguinis melancholici esse iudico: sed tamen vinosi, hoc est halituosi, et veluti motu quodam effervescentis.” See also *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.2, p. 70, l. 7. Cf. Arist., *Probl.* XXX, 953a10-954b40; Gal., *De locis affectis* 3, 9 (8, 176-178 Kühn). On the *fumositas* of both wine and (hot) melancholy, see especially Seuntjens, ‘Damp, walm en rook: luchtige hartstochten’, pp. 172-173.

among other things, short-temperedness and irascibility – features which Pascasius recognized all too easily in the compulsive gamblers he had observed during his stay in Spain and Northern Italy. According to Pascasius, maniacs are typically characterized by a narrowing of the mind: they focus on one and single idea, which moreover is wrong. Thus compulsive gamblers nourish the thought that they can bend fortune to their will and consequently are able to make profit from gambling by their own skills. In other words: compulsive gamblers are dreamers obsessed with the delusion of possessing a special power or force. At first, this obsessional thought induces them to extreme agitation: they are boisterous and enthusiastic. When they start losing after a while, they become aggressive and even paranoid. When, in the long run, they have lost everything, they sink into despondency and despair – typical features of the cold kind of melancholy.³⁵ It is interesting to note that the various phases of the mental process which Pascasius discerns are still acknowledged with only minor alterations by contemporary psychologists and psychotherapists.

4. A COGNITIVE THERAPY

Being a psychosomatic disease, compulsive gambling has to be cured by means of a therapy that pays attention to both bodily and mental aspects. Typically enough, the correct diagnosis of the illness is presented by Pascasius as the very starting-point of the healing process: it is only when compulsive gamblers (or their environment) realize that they are ill and that their disease is, moreover, psychosomatic, that a proper treatment can be given. As far as the body is concerned, Pascasius prescribes a treatment that is in line with the well-known allopathic principle of Hippocratic medicine: *contraria contrariis remedia sunt*.³⁶ As compulsive gamblers are characterized by a hot temper caused by an excessive heating of melancholic blood that boils and fumes like wine, it is all too clear that gamblers should avoid food and drinks which make them even hotter than they are already by nature. If anything, gamblers have to cool down – in the most literal sense of the word: refrigeration (*refrigeratio*) is the bottomline of the somatic treatment prescribed by our author.

It could be argued that the same principle underlies the psychotherapeutic part of Pascasius' treatment. As a compulsive gambler's mind is affected by the harmful

³⁵ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 6.1, pp. 39-41.

³⁶ *Alea*, lib. 1, cap. 6.1, p. 36, l. 25 and *passim*. The principle of compensation played a crucial role in ancient dietetics, as has convincingly been demonstrated by Michel Foucault in his *Histoire de la sexualité*, vol. 2. *L'usage des plaisirs* (Paris, 1984), ch. 2.

vapours of melancholic blood that boils and fumes, it withdraws itself from the control of reason: delusions take over, passions are given free play. The psychotherapy proposed by Pascasius is designed to restore reason's control and, as a result, calm down the mind.³⁷ It is a therapy that consists of various steps, the ultimate goal being that the compulsive gambler is capable of curing himself – and of keeping himself healthy and sane without any physician's or therapist's help. In this sense, Pascasius' booklet can rightly be defined as an early modern self-help book.

First, the therapist talks the patient into acknowledging his mental state. Indeed, following the lead of Galen who established a close link between passions and ill-conceived ideas,³⁸ Pascasius tries to make compulsive gamblers realize that their behaviour is based on delusional ideas. It is important to note that the author is perfectly aware of the fact that, more often than not, compulsive gamblers need another person – a friend who does not indulge in flattery or a philosophically minded physician (a psychotherapist, in other words) – to make them realize what they are unable to see of their own accord.³⁹ Next, the therapist teaches his patients to talk themselves into accepting that message. Pascasius concentrates primarily on two delusional ideas. First of all, compulsive gamblers believe all too easily that they can bend fortune to their will and, consequently, make a profit from gambling by their own skills. Second, they think it is perfectly licit to make a profit at another person's expense.⁴⁰ By correcting those two wrong ideas and replacing them with sound thoughts, a compulsive gambler will lose much of his compulsion: the more his passions are reined in by reason again, the less he will feel the urge to gamble. In the end, he will simply stop gambling. Whether he only becomes capable of keeping his compulsion in check or really manages to

³⁷ This is described by Pascasius as a process of cooling down or refrigerating. See esp. *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 1, p. 58, l. 21.

³⁸ See e.g. Armelle Debru, 'Passions et connaissance chez Galien', in B. Besnier, P.-F. Moreau and L. Renault (eds.), *Les passions antiques et médiévales. Théories et critiques*, vol. 1 (Paris, 2003), pp. 153-160. Contrary to Stoic doctrine, Galen did not identify passions with erroneous judgements. See J. Hankinson, 'Actions and Passions: Affection, Emotion and Moral Self-Management in Galen's Philosophical Psychology', in J. Brunschwig – Martha C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Passions & Perceptions. Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind. Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium Hellenisticum* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 184-222 (esp. pp. 192-201). There is only one passage in which Pascasius seems to adopt the Stoic, rather than Galen's, position, namely in *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 3, p. 64, ll. 21-22: "Istae enim opinionones (sc. erroneae) tanquam quaedam sunt intemperies animi, quae si tollantur, cito moderationem consequentur et veluti ex gravi turbidoque motu oborta tranquillitate conquiescent."

³⁹ *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.1, p. 68, ll. 19-21. The same insight can be found in Galen's work. See Jackie Pigeaud, *La maladie de l'âme. Etude sur la relation de l'âme et du corps dans la tradition médico-philosophique antique*, Collection d'Etudes Anciennes (Paris, 1981), pp. 67-70 and W.V. Harris, *Restraining Rage. The Ideology of Anger Control in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass.-London, 2001), p. 385-386.

⁴⁰ *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 3, p. 64.

eradicate it completely, is an important question which does not receive any clear answer in Pascasius' treatise.⁴¹

Whatever the final goal may be, it is not so easy to reach it. In order to change his thought process and behavioural pattern, a compulsive gambler has to learn to adopt a rich variety of psychotherapeutic strategies. Although Pascasius could have found them in several ancient (especially, but not exclusively Stoic) writings, he seems to have been inspired by Galen's work as well.⁴² The following three strategies appear to be of the utmost importance.

The first one consists of delay. A compulsive gambler should try to postpone passionate decisions and impulsive actions. This delay is made possible by rational reflection, which gives the mind the opportunity to calm down and restore reason's control.⁴³ The second one consists of permanent self-observation: the gambler has to monitor himself, aided by the therapist's exhortations which he has to inculcate into his own mind by repeating them incessantly. In order to advance this process, the exhortations are given to him in the form of sentences that can easily be memorized.⁴⁴ Thirdly, the compulsive gambler has to apply a kind of 'shock therapy': he has to picture as concretely and vividly as possible the detrimental effects of his addiction: loss of all his goods, the collapse of his family, social exclusion, and – last but not least – the loss of dignity.⁴⁵ Indeed, the strongest effect comes from visualizing oneself while involved in gambling or betting: half-drunk, exalted, even mad.⁴⁶ This quite painful self-confrontation is meant to create a cathartic moment, a crisis of revulsion – a painful but indispensable step in the slow but steady healing process which a compulsive

⁴¹ Interestingly enough, this also seems to be the case with Galen's psychotherapy. See Hankinson, 'Actions and Passions', pp. 202-204.

⁴² Pascasius explicitly refers to Galen in the psychotherapeutic part of his treatise, esp. in lib. 2, cap. 4.2, p. 70, ll.20-23. See also Pascasius' justification of his psychotherapy in the 'Praefatio ad lectores', p. 16, ll. 13-16: "In quo quidem si cui forsitan molestius paulo (nam varia sunt hominum ingenia) idem subinde repetere videbor, is non solum a Ciceronis libris ad Galeni volumina transisse me iamdiu sciat, verum etiam illud Senecae dictum putet: "Numquam satis dicitur, numquam quod discitur satis" [Sen., *Ep.* 27, 9]".

⁴³ *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.2, p. 70, ll. 29-31: "Ignorantia audaciam et confidentiam, scientia vero cunctationem et moram ac timiditatem affert." Cf. *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.2, p. 71, ll. 21-23. On the importance of delay in Galen's psychotherapy, see esp. Harris, *Restraining Rage*, p. 389.

⁴⁴ *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4, pp. 65-66: 'De formulis remediorum'. See also *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.4, pp. 78-80: 'Quid aleatores secum reputare ac disputare debeant'. Cf. Galen., *Aff. Dig.* 5, 7-14 and 30 (Kühn).

⁴⁵ *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.2, pp. 71-72; lib. 2, cap. 4.3, pp. 76-77; *passim*.

⁴⁶ *Alea*, lib. 2, cap. 4.5, p. 81, ll. 10-15: "Et cum haec in ore atque animo, tum etiam in memoria semper habeant: quanta sit eorum, qui alea ludunt, deformitas, timor, perturbatio. Suspensus incertusque illorum vultus, crebra coloris mutatio saepe ante oculos versentur. Deinde quantum calumniae scelus cogitent, postremo quam magnis et multis incommodis conflictentur."

gambler has to undergo.⁴⁷ For Pascasius is absolutely convinced of the healing power of (his) words. A compulsive gambler can cure himself if he takes his advice to heart, painstakingly executes the psychotherapeutic steps he describes, and systematically goes on applying them even when he thinks he is already cured. For it is only by creating a strong habitual control over his passions that he will be able to avoid a relapse – a point already much emphasized by Galen.⁴⁸ Needless to say, all this requires rigorous self-discipline. It is a hard lesson which Pascasius, according to his biographer Boxhornius a compulsive gambler himself,⁴⁹ had learnt from personal experience. For his treatise on gambling was a self-help book which was also – and perhaps even in the first place – designed to cure himself.

⁴⁷ On Galen's shock-based therapy, see esp. Harris, *Restraining Rage*, p. 373 and 386-387.

⁴⁸ *Aff. Dig.* 5, 15-16 (Kühn). Cf. Hankinson, 'Actions and Passions', pp. 199-200.

⁴⁹ *Pascasii Iusti de alea libri duo* (Amsterodami, 1642), 'Epistola dedicatoria', f. [*6v^o]: "Quibus, sicut et experientia instructus (...); 'Vita auctoris', f. *7v^o: "Alea vero adeo deperiit; perieruntque preces ejus et vota, quibus illum animi morbum ut Deus tolleret, serio et frequenter optavit."